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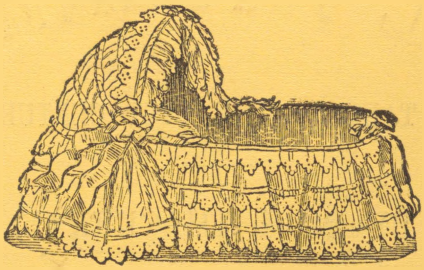

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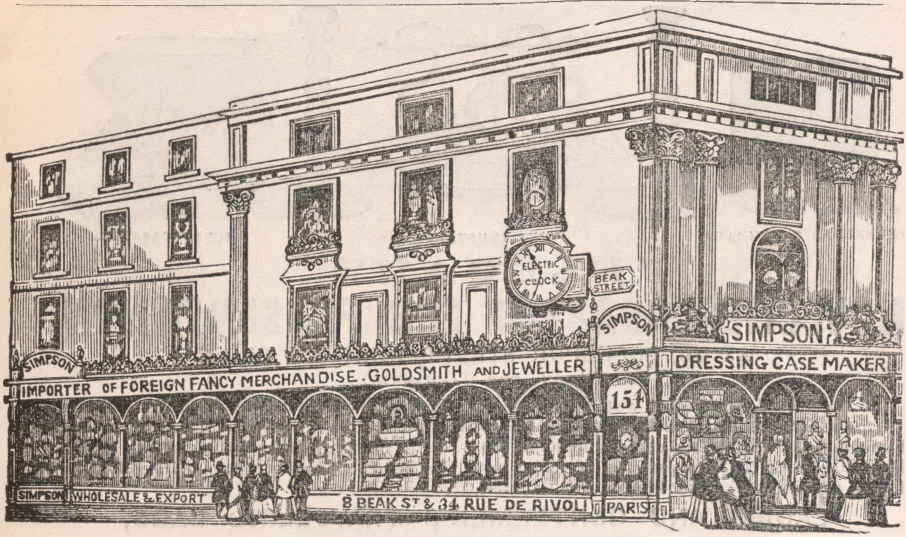

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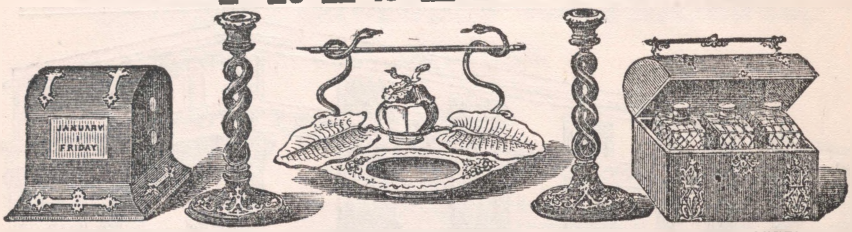

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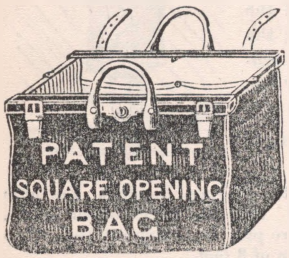

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CHAPTER XXXIII.

CONTAINS A SOLILOQUY BY HESTER.

MARTIN LAMBERT'S first feeling, upon learning the little secret which his younger daughter's emotion had revealed, was to be angry with the lad who had robbed his child's heart away from him, and her family. "A plague upon all scapegraces, English or Indian!" cried the Colonel to his wife, "I wish this one had broke his nose against any door-post but ours."

"Perhaps we are to cure him of being a scapegrace, my dear," says Mrs. Lambert, mildly interposing, "and the fall at our door hath something providential in it. You laughed at me, Mr. Lambert, when I said so before; but if Heaven did not send the young gentleman to us, who did? And it may be for the blessing and happiness of us all that he came, too."

"It's hard, Molly!" groaned the Colonel. "We cherish and fondle and rear 'em: we tend them through sickness and health: we toil and we scheme: we hoard away money in the stocking, and patch our own old coats: if they've a headache we can't sleep for thinking of their ailment; if they have a wish or fancy, we work day and night to compass it, and 'tis darling daddy and dearest pappy, and whose father

is like ours? and so forth. On Tuesday morning I am king of my house and family. On Tuesday evening Prince Whippersnapper makes his appearance, and my reign is over. A whole life is forgotten and forsworn for a pair of blue eyes, a pair of lean shanks, and a head of yellow hair."

"'Tis written that we women should leave all to follow our husband. I think *our* courtship was not very long, dear Martin!" said the matron, laying her hand on her husband's arm.

"'Tis human nature, and what can you expect of the jade?" sighed the Colonel.

"And I think I did my duty to my husband, though I own I left *my* papa for him," added Mrs. Lambert, softly.

"Excellent wench! Perdition catch my soul! but I do love thee, Molly!" says the good Colonel; "but, then mind you, your father never did me; and if ever I am to have sons-in-law——"

"Ever, indeed! Of course my girls are to have husbands, Mr. Lambert!" cries mamma.

"Well, when they come. I'll hate them, madam, as your father did me, and quite right too, for taking his treasure away from him."

"Don't be irreligious and unnatural, Martin Lambert! I say you *are* unnatural, sir!" continues the matron.

"Nay, my dear, I have an old tooth in my left-jaw, here; and 'tis natural that the tooth should come out. But when the tooth-drawer pulls it, 'tis natural that I should feel pain. Do you suppose, madam, that I don't love Hetty better than any tooth in my head?" asks Mr. Lambert. But no woman was ever averse to the idea of her daughter getting a husband, however fathers revolt against the invasion of the son-in-law. As for mothers and grandmothers, those good folks are married over again in the marriage of their young ones; and their souls attire themselves in the laces and muslins of twenty—forty years ago; the postilion's white ribbons bloom again, and they flutter into the post-chaise, and drive away. What woman, however old, has not the bridal-favours and raiment stowed away, and packed in lavender, in the inmost cupboards of her heart?

"It will be a sad thing, parting with her," continued Mrs. Lambert, with a sigh.

"You have settled that point already, Molly," laughs the Colonel. "Had I not best go out and order raisins and corinths for the wedding-cake?"

"And then I shall have to leave the house in their charge when I go to her, you know, in Virginia. How many miles is it to Virginia, Martin? I should think it must be thousands of miles."

"A hundred and seventy-three thousand three hundred and ninety-one and three-quarters, my dear, by the *near* way," answers Lambert, gravely; "that, through Prester John's country. By the other route, through Persia——"

"O give me the one where there is the least of the sea, and your

horrid ships, which I can't bear!" cries the Colonel's spouse. "I hope Rachel Esmond and I shall be better friends. She had a very high spirit when we were girls at school."

"Had we not best go about the baby linen, Mrs. Martin Lambert?" here interposed her wondering husband. Now, Mrs. Lambert, I dare say, thought there was no matter for wonderment at all, and had remarked some very pretty lace caps and bibs in Mrs. Bobbinit's toy-shop. And on that Sunday afternoon, when the discovery was made, and while little Hetty was lying upon her pillow with feverish cheeks, closed eyes, and a piteous face, her mother looked at the child with the most perfect ease of mind, and seemed to be rather pleased than otherwise at Hetty's woe.

The girl was not only unhappy, but enraged with herself for having published her secret. Perhaps she had not known it until the sudden emotion acquainted her with her own state of mind; and now the little maid chose to be as much ashamed as if she had done a wrong, and been discovered in it. She was indignant with her own weakness, and broke into transports of wrath against herself. She vowed she never would forgive herself for submitting to such a humiliation. So the young pard, wounded by the hunter's dart, chafes with rage in the forest, is angry with the surprise of the rankling steel in her side, and snarls and bites at her sister-cubs, and the leopardess, her spotted mother.

Little Hetty tore and gnawed, and growled, so that I should not like to have been her fraternal cub, or her spotted dam or sire. "What business has any young woman," she cried out, "to indulge in any such nonsense? Mamma, I ought to be whipped, and sent to bed. I know perfectly well that Mr. Warrington does not care a fig about me. I dare say he likes French actresses and the commonest little milliner-girl in the toyshop better than me. And so he ought, and so they *are* better than me. Why, what a fool I am to burst out crying like a ninny about nothing, and because Mr. Wolfe said Harry played cards of a Sunday! I know he is not clever, like papa. I believe he is stupid —I am certain he is stupid; but he is not so stupid as I am. Why, of course, I can't marry him. How am I to go to America, and leave you and Theo? Of course, he likes somebody else, at America, or at Tunbridge, or at Jericho, or somewhere. He is a prince in his own country, and can't think of marrying a poor half-pay officer's daughter, with twopence to her fortune. Used not you to tell me how, when I was a baby, I cried and wanted the moon? I am a baby now, a most absurd, silly, little baby — don't talk to me, Mrs. Lambert, I *am*. Only there is this to be said, he don't know anything about it, and I would rather cut my tongue out than tell him."

Dire were the threats with which Hetty menaced Theo, in case her sister should betray her. As for the infantile Charley, his mind being altogether set on cheesecakes, he had not remarked or been moved by

Miss Hester's emotion; and the parents and the kind sister of course all promised not to reveal the little maid's secret.

"I begin to think it had been best for us to stay at home," sighed Mrs. Lambert to her husband.

"Nay, my dear," replied the other. "Human nature will be human nature; surely Hetty's mother told me herself that she had the beginning of a liking for a certain young curate before she fell over head and heels in love with a certain young officer of Kingsley's. And as for me, my heart was wounded in a dozen places ere Miss Molly Benson took entire possession of it. Our sons and daughters must follow in the way of their parents before them, I suppose. Why, but yesterday, you were scolding me for grumbling at Miss Het's precocious fancies. To do the child justice, she disguises her feelings entirely, and I defy Mr. Warrington to know from her behaviour how she is disposed towards him."

"A daughter of mine and yours, Martin," cries the mother with great dignity, "is not going to fling herself at a gentleman's head!"

"Neither herself nor the teacup, my dear," answers the Colonel. "Little Miss Het treats Mr. Warrington like a vixen. He never comes to us, but she boxes his ears in one fashion or t'other. I protest she is barely civil to him; but, knowing what is going on in the young hypocrite's mind, I am not going to be angry at her rudeness."

"She hath no need to be rude at all, Martin; and our girl is good enough for any gentleman in England or America. Why, if their ages suit, shouldn't they marry after all, sir?"

"Why, if he wants her, shouldn't he ask her, my dear? I am sorry we came. I am for putting the horses into the carriage, and turning their heads towards home again."

But mamma fondly said, "Depend on it, my dear, that these matters are wisely ordained for us. Depend upon it, Martin, it was not for nothing that Harry Warrington was brought to our gate in that way; and that he and our children are thus brought together again. If that marriage has been decreed in Heaven, a marriage it will be."

"At what age, Molly, I wonder, do women begin and leave off match-making? If our little chit falls in love and falls out again, she will not be the first of her sex, Mrs. Lambert. I wish we were on our way home again, and, if I had my will, would trot off this very night."

"He has promised to drink his tea here to-night. You would not take away our child's pleasure, Martin?" asked the mother, softly.

In his fashion, the father was not less good-natured. "You know, my dear," says Lambert, "that if either of 'em had a fancy to our ears, we would cut them off and serve them in a fricassée."

Mary Lambert laughed at the idea of her pretty little delicate ears being so served. When her husband was most tender-hearted, his habit was to be most grotesque. When he pulled the pretty little delicate ear, behind which the matron's fine hair was combed back, wherein twinkled a shining line or two of silver, I daresay he did not hurt her

much. I daresay she was thinking of the soft, well-remembered times of her own modest youth and sweet courtship. Hallowed remembrances of sacred times! If the sight of youthful love is pleasant to behold, how much more charming the aspect of the affection that has survived years, sorrows, faded beauty perhaps, and life's doubts, differences, trouble!

In regard of her promise to disguise her feelings for Mr. Warrington in that gentleman's presence, Miss Hester was better, or worse if you will, than her word. Harry not only came to take tea with his friends, but invited them for the next day to an entertainment at the Rooms, to be given in their special honour.

"A dance, and given for us!" cries Theo. "O Harry, how delightful; I wish we could begin this very minute!"

"Why, for a savage Virginian, I declare, Harry Warrington, thou art the most civilised young man possible!" says the Colonel. "My dear, shall we dance a minuet together?"

"We have done such a thing before, Martin Lambert!" says the soldier's fond wife. Her husband hums a minuet tune; whips a plate from the tea-table, and makes a preparatory bow and flourish with it as if it were a hat, whilst madam performs her best curtsey.

Only Hetty, of the party, persists in looking glum and displeased. "Why, child, have you not a word of thanks to throw to Mr. Warrington?" asks Theo of her sister.

"I never did care for dancing much," says Hetty. "What is the use of standing up opposite a stupid man, and dancing down a room with him?"

"*Merci du compliment!*" says Mr. Warrington.

"I don't say that you are stupid—that is—that is, I—I only meant country dances," says Hetty, biting her lips, as she caught her sister's eye. She remembered she *had* said Harry was stupid, and Theo's droll humorous glance was her only reminder.

But with this Miss Hetty chose to be as angry as if it had been quite a cruel rebuke. "I hate dancing—there—I own it," she says, with a toss of her head.

"Nay, you used to like it well enough, child!" interposes her mother.

"That was when she was a child: don't you see she is grown up to be an old woman?" remarks Hetty's father. "Or perhaps Miss Hester has got the gout?"

"Fiddle!" says Hester, snappishly, drubbing with her little feet.

"What's a dance without a fiddle?" says imperturbed papa.

Darkness has come over Harry Warrington's face. "I come to try my best, and give them pleasure and a dance," he thinks, "and the little thing tells me she hates dancing. We don't practise kindness, or acknowledge hospitality so in our country. No—nor speak to our parents so, neither." I am afraid, in this particular, usages have changed in the United States during the last hundred years, and that the young folks there are considerably *Hettified*.

Not content with this, Miss Hester must proceed to make such fun of all the company at the Wells, and especially of Harry's own immediate pursuits and companions, that the honest lad was still farther pained at her behaviour; and, when he saw Mrs. Lambert alone, asked how or in what he had again offended, that Hester was so angry with him? The kind matron felt more than ever well disposed towards the boy, after her daughter's conduct to him. She would have liked to tell the secret which Hester hid so fiercely. Theo, too, remonstrated with her sister in private; but Hester would not listen to the subject, and was as angry in her bedroom, when the girls were alone, as she had been in the parlour before her mother's company. "Suppose he hates me?" says she. "I expect he will. I hate myself, I do, and scorn myself for being such an idiot. How ought he to do otherwise than hate me? Didn't I abuse him, call him goose, all sorts of names? And I know he is not clever all the time. I know I have better wits than he has. It is only because he is tall, and has blue eyes, and a pretty nose that I like him. What an absurd fool a girl must be to like a man merely because he has a blue nose and hooked eyes! So I *am* a fool, and I won't have you say a word to the contrary, Theo!"

Now Theo thought that her little sister, far from being a fool, was a wonder of wonders, and that if any girl was worthy of any prince in Christendom, Hetty was that spinster. "You *are* silly sometimes, Hetty," says Theo, "that is when you speak unkindly to people who mean you well, as you did to Mr. Warrington at tea to-night. When he proposed to us his party at the Assembly Rooms, and nothing could be more gallant of him, why did you say you didn't care for music, or dancing, or tea? You know you love them all!"

"I said it merely to vex myself, Theo, and annoy myself, and whip myself, as I deserve, child. And, besides, how can you expect such an idiot as I am to say anything but idiotic things? Do you know it quite pleased me to see him angry. I thought, ah! now I have hurt his feelings! Now he will say, Hetty Lambert is an odious little set-up, sour-tempered vixen. And that will teach him, and you, and mamma, and papa, at any rate, that I am not going to set my cap at Mr. Harry. No; our papa is ten times as good as he is. I will stay by our papa, and if he asked me to go to Virginia with him to-morrow I wouldn't, Theo. My sister is worth all the Virginians that ever were made since the world began."

And here, I suppose, follow osculations between the sisters, and mother's knock comes to the door, who has overheard their talk through the wainscot, and calls out, "Children, 'tis time to go to sleep." Theo's eyes close speedily, and she is at rest; but, O, poor little Hetty! Think of the hours tolling one after another, and the child's eyes wide open, as she lies tossing and wakeful with the anguish of the new wound!

"It is a judgment upon me," she says, "for having thought and spoke scornfully of him. Only, why should there be a judgment upon me? I was only in fun. I knew I liked him very much all the time:

but I thought Theo liked him too, and I would give up anything for my darling Theo. If she had, no tortures should ever have drawn a word from me—I would have got a rope ladder to help her to run away with Harry, that I would, or fetched the clergyman to marry them. And then I would have retired alone, and alone, and alone, and taken care of papa and mamma, and of the poor in the village, and have read sermons, though I hate 'em, and have died without telling a word—not a word—and I shall die soon, I know I shall." But when the dawn rises, the little maid is asleep nestling by her sister, the stain of a tear or two upon her flushed downy cheek.

Most of us play with edged tools at some period of our lives, and cut ourselves accordingly. At first the cut hurts and stings, and down drops the knife, and we cry out like wounded little babies as we are. Some very very few and unlucky folks at the game cut their heads sheer off, or stab themselves mortally, and perish outright, and there is an end of them. But,—Heaven help us!—many people have fingered those *ardentes sagittas* which Love sharpens on his whetstone, and are stabbed, scarred, pricked, perforated, tattooed all over with the wounds, who recover, and live to be quite lively. *Wir auch* have tasted *das irdische Glück;* we also have *gelebt und—und so weiter.* Warble your death song, sweet Thekla! Perish off the face of the earth, poor pulmonary victim, if so minded! Had you survived to a later period of life, my dear, you would have thought of a sentimental disappointment without any reference to the undertaker. Let us trust there is no present need of a sexton for Miss Hetty. But meanwhile, the very instant she wakes, there, tearing at her little heart, will that Care be, which has given her a few hours respite, melted, no doubt, by her youth and her tears.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

IN WHICH MR. WARRINGTON TREATS THE COMPANY WITH TEA AND A BALL.

GENEROUS with his very easily gotten money, hospitable and cordial to all, our young Virginian, in his capacity of man of fashion, could not do less than treat his country friends to an entertainment at the Assembly Rooms, whither, according to the custom of the day, he invited almost all the remaining company at the Wells. Card-tables were set in one apartment, for all those who could not spend an evening without the pastime then common to all European society: a supper with champagne in some profusion and bowls of negus was prepared in another chamber: the large assembly room was set apart for the dance, of which enjoyment Harry Warrington's guests partook in our ancestors' homely fashion. I cannot fancy that the amusement was especially lively. First, minuets were called; two or three of which were performed by as many couple. The spinsters of the highest rank in the assembly went out for the minuet, and my Lady Maria Esmond being an earl's daughter, and the person of the highest rank present (with the exception of Lady Augusta Crutchley, who was lame), Mr. Warring-

ton danced the first minuet with his cousin, acquitting himself to the satisfaction of the whole room, and performing much more elegantly than Mr. Wolfe, who stood up with Miss Lowther. Having completed the dance with Lady Maria, Mr. Warrington begged Miss Theo to do him the honour of walking the next minuet, and accordingly Miss Theo, blushing and looking very happy, went through her exercise to the great delight of her parents and the rage of Miss Humpleby, Sir John Humpleby's daughter, of Liphook, who expected, at least, to have stood up next after my Lady Maria. Then, after the minuets, came country dances, the music being performed by a harp, fiddle, and flageolet; perched in a little balcony, and thrumming through the evening rather feeble and melancholy tunes. Take up an old book of music, and play a few of those tunes now, and one wonders how people at any time could have found the airs otherwise than melancholy. And yet they loved and frisked and laughed and courted to that sad accompaniment. There is scarce one of the airs that has not an *amari aliquid*, a tang of sadness. Perhaps it is because they are old and defunct, and their plaintive echoes call out to us from the limbo of the past, whither they have been consigned for this century. Perhaps they *were* gay when they were alive; and our descendants when they hear—well, never mind names—when they hear the works of certain maestri now popular, will say: Bon Dieu, is this the music which amused our forefathers?

Mr. Warrington had the honour of a duchess's company at his tea-drinking—Colonel Lambert's and Mr. Prior's heroine, the Duchess of Queensberry. And though the duchess carefully turned her back upon a countess who was present, laughed loudly, glanced at the latter over her shoulder, and pointed at her with her fan, yet almost all the company pushed, and bowed, and cringed, and smiled, and backed before this countess, scarcely taking any notice of her Grace of Queensberry and her jokes, and her fan, and her airs. Now this countess was no other than the Countess of Yarmouth-Walmoden, the lady whom his Majesty George the Second, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, delighted to honour. She had met Harry Warrington in the walks that morning, and had been mighty gracious to the young Virginian. She had told him they would have a game at cards that night; and purblind old Colonel Blinkinsop, who fancied the invitation had been addressed to him, had made the profoundest of bows. "Pooh! pooh!" said the Countess of England and Hanover, "I don't mean you. I mean the young Firshinian!" And everybody congratulated the youth on his good fortune. At night, all the world, in order to show their loyalty, doubtless, thronged round my Lady Yarmouth; my Lord Bamborough was eager to make her *partie* at quadrille; my Lady Blanche Pendragon, that model of virtue; Sir Lancelot Quintain, that pattern of knighthood and valour; Mr. Dean of Ealing, that exemplary divine and preacher; numerous gentlemen, noblemen, generals, colonels, matrons, and spinsters of the highest

rank, were on the watch for a smile from her, or eager to jump up and join her card-table. Lady Maria waited upon her with meek respect, and Madame de Bernstein treated the Hanoverian lady with profound gravity and courtesy.

Harry's bow had been no lower than hospitality required; but, such as it was, Miss Hester chose to be indignant with it. She scarce spoke a word to her partner during their dance together; and when he took her to the supper-room for refreshment she was little more communicative. To enter that room they had to pass by Madame Walmoden's card-table, who goodnaturedly called out to her host as he was passing, and asked him if his "breddy liddle bardner liked tanzing?"

"I thank your ladyship, I don't like tanzing, and I don't like cards," says Miss Hester, tossing up her head; and, dropping a curtsey like a "cheese," she strutted away from the countess's table.

Mr. Warrington was very much offended. Sarcasm from the young to the old pained him: flippant behaviour towards himself hurt him. Courteous in his simple way to all persons whom he met, he expected a like politeness from them. Hetty perfectly well knew what offence she was giving; could mark the displeasure reddening on her partner's honest face, with a side-long glance of her eye; nevertheless she tried to wear her most ingenuous smile; and, as she came up to the side-board where the refreshments were set, artlessly said:—

"What a horrid, vulgar old woman that is; don't you think so?"

"*What* woman?" asked the young man.

"That German woman—my lady Yarmouth—to whom all the men are bowing and cringing."

"Her ladyship has been very kind to me," says Harry, grimly. "Won't you have some of this custard?"

"And you have been bowing to her, too! You look as if your negus was not nice," harmlessly continues Miss Hetty.

"It is not very good negus," says Harry, with a gulp.

"And the custard is bad too! I declare 'tis made with bad eggs!" cries Miss Lambert.

"I wish Hester, that the entertainment and the company had been better to your liking," says poor Harry.

"'Tis very unfortunate; but I daresay you could not help it," cries the young woman, tossing her little curly head.

Mr. Warrington groaned in spirit, perhaps in body, and clenched his fists and his teeth. The little torturer artlessly continued, "You seem disturbed: shall we go to my mamma?"

"Yes, let us go to your mamma," cries Mr. Warrington, with glaring eyes and a "Curse you, why are you always standing in the way?" to an unlucky waiter.

"La! Is that the way you speak in Virginia?" asks Miss Pertness.

"We are rough there sometimes, madam, and can't help being disturbed," he says slowly, and with a quiver in his whole frame, looking

down upon her with fire flashing out of his eyes. Hetty saw nothing distinctly afterwards, and until she came to her mother. Never had she seen Harry look so handsome or so noble.

"You look pale, child!" cries mamma, anxious like all *pavidæ matres*.

"'Tis the cold—no, I mean the heat. Thank you, Mr. Warrington." And she makes him a faint curtsey, as Harry bows a tremendous bow, and walks elsewhere amongst his guests. He hardly knows what is happening at first, so angry is he.

He is aroused by another altercation between his aunt and the Duchess of Queensberry. When the royal favourite passed the duchess, her grace gave her ladyship an awful stare out of eyes that were not so bright now as they had been in the young days when they "set the world on fire;" turned round with an affected laugh to her neighbour, and shot at the jolly Hanoverian lady a ceaseless fire of giggles and sneers. The countess pursued her game at cards, not knowing, or not choosing perhaps to know, how her enemy was jibing at her. There had been a feud of many years' date between their Graces of Queensberry and the family on the throne.

"How you all bow down to the idol! Don't tell me! You are as bad as the rest, my good Madame Bernstein!" the Duchess says. "Ah, what a true Christian country this is! and how your dear first husband, the Bishop, would have liked to see such a sight!"

"Forgive me, if I fail quite to understand your Grace."

"We are both of us growing old, my good Bernstein, or, perhaps, we won't understand when we don't choose to understand. That is the way with us women, my good young Iroquois."

"Your Grace remarked, that it was a Christian country," said Madame de Bernstein, "and I failed to perceive the point of the remark."

"Indeed, my good creature, there is very little point in it! I meant we were such good Christians, because we were so forgiving. Don't you remember reading when you were young, or your husband the Bishop reading when he was in the pulpit, how, when a woman amongst the Jews was caught doing wrong, the Pharisees were for stoning her out of hand? Far from stoning such a woman now, look, how fond we are of her! Any man in this room would go round it on his knees if yonder woman bade him. Yes, Madam Walmoden, you may look up from your cards with your great painted face, and frown with your great painted eyebrows at me. You know I am talking about you; and I intend to go on talking about you, too. I say any man here would go round the room on his knees, if you bade him!"

"I think, madam, I know two or three who wouldn't!" says Mr. Warrington, with some spirit.

"Quick, let me hug them to my heart of hearts!" cries the old Duchess. "Which are they? Bring 'em to me, my dear Iroquois! Let us have a game of four—of honest men and women; that is to say, if we can find a couple more partners, Mr. Warrington!"

"Here are we three," says the Baroness Bernstein, with a forced laugh; "let us play a dummy."

"Pray, madam, where is the third?" asks the old Duchess, looking round.

"Madam!" cries out the other elderly lady, "I leave your Grace to boast of your honesty, which I have no doubt is spotless: but I will thank you not to doubt mine before my own relatives and children!"

"See how she fires up at a word! I am sure, my dear creature, you are quite as honest as most of the company," says the Duchess.

"Which may not be good enough for her Grace the Duchess of Queensberry and Dover, who, to be sure, might have stayed away in such a case, but it is the best my nephew could get, madam, and his best he has given you. You look astonished, Harry, my dear—and well you may. He is not used to our ways, madam."

"Madam, he has found an aunt who can teach him our ways, and a great deal more!" cries the Duchess, rapping her fan.

"She will teach him to try and make all his guests welcome, old or young, rich or poor. That is the Virginian way, isn't it, Harry? She will tell him, when Catherine Hyde is angry with his old aunt, that they were friends as girls, and ought not to quarrel now they are old women. And she will not be wrong, will she, Duchess?" And herewith the one dowager made a superb curtsey to the other, and the battle just impending between them passed away.

"Egad, it was like Byng and Galissonière!" cried Chaplain Sampson, as Harry talked over the night's transactions with his pupil next morning. "No power on earth, I thought, could have prevented those two from going into action!"

"Seventy-fours at least—both of 'em!" laughs Harry.

"But the Baroness declined the battle, and sailed out of fire with inimitable skill."

"Why should she be afraid? I have heard you say my aunt is as witty as any woman alive, and need fear the tongue of no dowager in England."

"Hem! Perhaps she had good reasons for being peaceable!" Sampson knew very well what they were, and that poor Bernstein's reputation was so hopelessly flawed and cracked, that any sarcasms levelled at Madame Walmoden were equally applicable to her.

"Sir," cried Harry, in great amazement, "you don't mean to say there is anything against the character of my aunt, the Baroness de Bernstein!"

The Chaplain looked at the young Virginian with such an air of utter wonderment, that the latter saw there must be some history against his aunt, and some charge which Sampson did not choose to reveal. "Great Heavens!" Harry groaned out, "are there two then in the family, who are ——"

"Which two?" asked the Chaplain.

But here Harry stopped, blushing very red. He remembered, and we shall presently have to state, whence he had got his information regarding the other family culprit, and bit his lip, and was silent.

"By-gones are always unpleasant things, Mr. Warrington," said the Chaplain; "and we had best hold our peace regarding them. No man or woman can live long in this wicked world of ours, without some scandal attaching to them, and I fear our excellent Baroness has been no more fortunate than her neighbours. We cannot escape calumny, my dear young friend! You have had sad proof enough of that in your brief stay amongst us. But we can have clear consciences, and that is the main point!" And herewith the Chaplain threw his handsome eyes upward, and tried to look as if *his* conscience was as white as the ceiling.

"Has there been anything *very* wrong then, about my Aunt Bernstein?" continued Harry, remembering how at home his mother had never spoken of the Baroness.

"*O sancta simplicitas!*" the Chaplain muttered to himself. "Stories, my dear sir, much older than your time or mine. Stories such as were told about everybody, *de me, de te;* you know with what degree of truth in your own case."

"Confound the villain! I should like to hear any scoundrel say a word against the dear old lady," cries the young gentleman. "Why, this world, parson, is full of lies and scandal!"

"And you are just beginning to find it out, my dear sir," cries the clergyman, with his most beatified air. "Whose character has not been attacked? My lord's, yours, mine,—everyone's. We must bear as well as we can, and pardon to the utmost of our power."

"You may. It's your cloth, you know; but, by George, *I* won't!" cries Mr. Warrington, and again goes down the fist with a thump on the table. "Let any fellow say a word in my hearing against that dear old creature, and I'll pull his nose, as sure as my name is Henry Esmond. How do you do, Colonel Lambert. You find us late again, sir. Me and his Reverence kept it up pretty late with some of the young fellows, after the ladies went away. I hope the dear ladies are well, sir?" and here Harry rose, greeting his friend the Colonel very kindly, who had come to pay him a morning-visit, and had entered the room followed by Mr. Gumbo (the latter preferred walking very leisurely about all the affairs of life) just as Harry—suiting the action to the word—was tweaking the nose of Calumny.

"The ladies are purely. Whose nose were you pulling when I came in, Mr. Warrington?" says the Colonel, laughing.

"Isn't it a shame, sir? The parson, here, was telling me, that there are villains here who attack the character of my aunt, the Baroness of Bernstein!"

"You don't mean to say so!" cries Mr. Lambert.

"I tell Mr. Harry that everybody is calumniated!" says the Chaplain, with a clerical intonation; but, at the same time, he looks

at Colonel Lambert and winks, as much as to say, "He knows nothing —keep him in the dark."

The Colonel took the hint. "Yes," says he, "the jaws of slander are for ever wagging. Witness that story about the dancing-girl, that we all believed against you, Harry Warrington."

"What all, sir?"

"No, not all. One didn't — Hetty didn't. You should have heard her standing up for you, Harry, t'other day, when somebody—a little bird—brought us *another* story about you; about a game at cards on Sunday morning, when you and a friend of yours might have been better employed." And here there was a look of mingled humour and reproof at the clergyman.

"Faith, I own it, sir!" says the chaplain. "It was *mea culpa, mea maxima*—no, *mea minima culpa*, only the rehearsal of an old game at picquet, which we had been talking over."

"And did Miss Hester stand up for me?" says Harry.

"Miss Hester did. But why that wondering look?" asks the Colonel.

"She scolded me last night like—like anything," says downright Harry. "I never heard a young girl go on so. She made fun of everybody—hit about at young and old—so that I couldn't help telling her, sir, that in our country, leastways in Virginia (they say the Yankees are very pert), young people don't speak of their elders so. And, do you know, sir, we had a sort of a quarrel, and I'm very glad you've told me she spoke kindly of me," says Harry, shaking his friend's hand, a ready boyish emotion glowing in his cheeks and in his eyes.

"You won't come to much hurt if you find no worse enemy than Hester, Mr. Warrington," said the girl's father, gravely, looking not without a deep thrill of interest at the flushed face and moist eyes of his young friend. "Is he fond of her?" thought the Colonel. "And how fond? 'Tis evident he knows nothing, and Miss Het has been performing some of her tricks. He is a fine, honest lad, and God bless him." And Colonel Lambert looked towards Harry with that manly, friendly kindness which our lucky young Virginian was not unaccustomed to inspire, for he was comely to look at, prone to blush, to kindle, nay, to melt, at a kind story. His laughter was cheery to hear: his eyes shone confidently: his voice spoke truth.

"And the young lady of the minuet? She distinguished herself to perfection: the whole room admired," asked the courtly Chaplain, "I trust Miss—Miss——"

"Miss Theodosia is perfectly well, and ready to dance at this minute with your reverence," says her father. "Or stay, Chaplain, perhaps you only dance on Sunday?" The Colonel then turned to Harry again. "You paid your court very neatly to the great lady, Mr. Flatterer. My Lady Yarmouth has been trumpeting your praises at the Pump Room. She says she has got a leedel boy in Hannover dat is wery like you, and you are a sharming young mans."

"If her ladyship were a queen, people could scarcely be more respectful to her," says the Chaplain.

"Let us call her a vice-queen, parson," says the Colonel, with a twinkle of his eye.

"Her majesty pocketed forty of my guineas at quadrille," cries Mr. Warrington, with a laugh.

"She will play you on the same terms another day. The countess is fond of play, and she wins from most people," said the Colonel, drily. "Why don't you bet her ladyship five thousand on a bishopric, parson? I have heard of a clergyman who made such a bet, and who lost it, and who paid it, and who got the bishopric."

"Ah! who will lend me the five thousand? Will you, sir?" asked the Chaplain.

"No, sir. I won't give her five thousand to be made Commander-in-Chief or Pope of Rome," says the Colonel stoutly. "I shall fling no stones at the woman; but I shall bow no knee to her, as I see a pack of rascals do. No offence—I don't mean you. And I don't mean Harry Warrington, who was quite right to be civil to her, and to lose his money with good humour. Harry, I am come to bid thee farewell, my boy. We have had our pleasuring—my money is run out, and we must jog back to Oakhurst. Will you ever come and see the old place again?"

"Now, sir, now! I'll ride back with you!" cries Harry, eagerly.

"Why—no—not now," says the Colonel in a hurried manner. "We haven't got room—that is, we're—were expecting some friends [the Lord forgive me for the lie!" he mutters]. "But—but you'll come to us when—when Tom's at home—yes, when Tom's at home. That will be famous fun—and I'd have you to know, sir, that my wife and I love you sincerely, sir—and so do the girls, however much they scold you. And if you ever are in a scrape—and such things have happened, Mr. Chaplain! you will please to count upon me. Mind that, sir!"

And the Colonel was for taking leave of Harry then and there, on the spot, but the young man followed him down the stairs, and insisted upon saying good-bye to his dear ladies.

Instead, however, of proceeding immediately to Mr. Lambert's lodging, the two gentlemen took the direction of the common, where, looking from Harry's windows, Mr. Sampson saw the pair in earnest conversation. First, Lambert smiled and looked roguish. Then, presently, at a farther stage of the talk, he flung up both his hands and performed other gestures indicating surprise and agitation.

"The boy is telling him," thought the Chaplain. When Mr. Warrington came back in an hour, he found his Reverence deep in the composition of a sermon. Harry's face was grave and melancholy; he flung down his hat, buried himself in a great chair, and then came from his lips something like an execration.

"The young ladies are going, and our heart is affected?" said the Chaplain, looking up from his manuscript.

"Heart!" sneered Harry.

"Which of the young ladies is the conqueror, sir? I thought the youngest's eyes followed you about at your ball."

"Confound the little termagant!" broke out Harry, "what does she mean by being so pert to me. She treats me as if I was a fool!"

"And no man is, sir, with a woman!" said the scribe of the sermon.

"Ain't they, Chaplain?" And Harry growled out more naughty words expressive of inward disquiet.

"By the way, have you heard anything of your lost property?" asked the Chaplain, presently looking up from his pages.

Harry said, "No!" with another word, which I would not print for the world.

"I begin to suspect, sir, that there was more money than you like to own in that book. I wish I could find some."

"There were notes in it," said Harry, very gloomily, "and—and papers that I am very sorry to lose. What the deuce has come of it? I had it when we dined together."

"I saw you put it in your pocket!" cried the Chaplain. I saw you take it out and pay at the toyshop a bill for a gold thimble and work-box for one of your young ladies. Of course you have asked there, sir?"

"Of course I have," says Mr. Warrington, plunged in melancholy.

"Gumbo put you to bed, at least, if I remember right. I was so cut myself that I scarce remember anything. Can you trust those black fellows, sir?"

"I can trust him with my head. With my head?" groaned out Mr. Warrington, bitterly. "I can't trust myself with it.

"O that a man should put an enemy into his mouth to steal away his brains!"

"You may well call it an enemy, Chaplain. Hang it, I have a great mind to make a vow never to drink another drop! A fellow says anything when he is in drink."

The Chaplain laughed. "You, sir," he said, "are close enough!" And the truth was, that, for the last few days, no amount of wine would unseal Mr. Warrington's lips, when the artless Sampson by chance touched on the subject of his patron's loss.

"And so the little country nymphs are gone, or going, sir?" asked the Chaplain. "They were nice, fresh little things; but I think the mother was the finest woman of the three. I declare, a woman at five-and-thirty or so is at her prime. What do you say, sir?"

Mr. Warrington looked, for a moment, askance at the Clergyman. "Confound all women, I say!" muttered the young misogynist. For which sentiment every well-conditioned person will surely rebuke him.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ENTANGLEMENTS.

UR good Colonel had, no doubt, taken counsel with his good wife, and they had determined to remove their little Hetty as speedily as possible out of the reach of the charmer. In complaints such as that under which the poor little maiden was supposed to be suffering, the remedy of absence and distance often acts effectually with men; but I believe women are not so easily cured by the alibi treatment. Some of them will go away ever so far, and for ever so long, and the obstinate disease hangs by them, spite of distance or climate. You may whip, abuse, torture, insult them, and still the little deluded creatures will persist in their fidelity. Nay, if I may speak, after profound and extensive study and observation, there are few better ways of securing the faithfulness and admiration of the beautiful partners of our existence than a little judicious ill-treatment, a brisk dose of occasional violence as an alterative, and, for general and wholesome diet, a cooling but pretty constant neglect. At sparing intervals, administer small quantities of love and kindness; but not every day, or too often, as this medicine, much taken, loses its effect. Those dear creatures who are the most indifferent to their husbands, are those who are cloyed by too much surfeiting of the sugarplums and lollypops of Love. I have known a young being, with every wish gratified, yawn in her adoring husband's face, and prefer the conversation and *petits soins* of the merest booby and idiot; whilst, on the other hand, I have seen Chloe,—at whom Strephon

has flung his bootjack in the morning, or whom he has cursed before the servants at dinner,—come creeping and fondling to his knee at tea-time, when he is comfortable after his little nap and his good wine; and pat his head and play him his favourite tunes; and, when old John, the butler, or old Mary, the maid, comes in with the bed-candles, look round proudly, as much as to say, *now* John look how good my dearest Henry is! Make your game, gentlemen, then! There is the coaxing, fondling, adoring line, when you are henpecked, and Louisa is indifferent, and bored out of her existence. There is the manly, selfish, effectual system, where she answers to the whistle; and comes in at "Down Charge;" and knows her master; and frisks and fawns about him; and nuzzles at his knees; and "licks the hand that's raised"—that's raised to do her good, as (I quote from memory) Mr. Pope finely observes. What used the late lamented O'Connell to say, over whom a grateful country has raised such a magnificent testimonial? "Hereditary bondsmen," he used to remark, "know ye not, who would be free, themselves must *strike the blow?*" Of course you must, in political as in domestic circles. So up with your cudgels, my enslaved, injured boys!

Women will be pleased with these remarks, because they have such a taste for humour and understand irony: and I should not be surprised if young Grubstreet, who corresponds with three penny papers and describes the persons and conversation of gentlemen whom he meets at his "clubs," will say, "I told you so! He advocates the thrashing of women! He has no nobility of soul! He has no heart!" Nor have I, my eminent young Grubstreet! any more than you have ears. Dear ladies! I assure you I am only joking in the above remarks,—I do not advocate the thrashing of your sex at all,—and, as you can't understand the commonest bit of fun, beg leave flatly to tell you, that I consider your sex a hundred times more loving and faithful than ours.

So, what is the use of Hetty's parents taking her home, if the little maid intends to be just as fond of Harry absent as of Harry present? Why not let her see him before Ball and Dobbin are put to, and say "Good-bye, Harry! I was very wilful and fractious last night, and you were very kind: but good-bye, Harry!" She will show no special emotion: she is so ashamed of her secret, that she will not betray it. Harry is too much preoccupied to discover it for himself. He does not know what grief is lying behind Hetty's glances, or hidden under the artifice of her innocent young smiles. He has, perhaps, a care of his own. He will part from her calmly, and fancy she is happy to get back to her music and her poultry and her flower-garden.

He did not even ride part of the way homewards by the side of his friend's carriage. He had some other party arranged for that afternoon, and when he returned thence, the good Lamberts were gone from Tunbridge Wells. There were their windows open, and the card in one of them signifying that the apartments were once

more to let. A little passing sorrow at the blank aspect of the rooms lately enlivened by countenances so frank and friendly, may have crossed the young gentleman's mind; but he dines at the White Horse at four o'clock, and eats his dinner and calls fiercely for his bottle. Poor little Hester will choke over her tea about the same hour when the Lamberts arrive to sleep at the house of their friends at Westerham. The young roses will be wan in her cheeks in the morning, and there will be black circles round her eyes. It was the thunder: the night was hot: she could not sleep: she will be better when she gets home again the next day. And home they come. There is the gate where he fell. There is the bed he lay in, the chair in which he used to sit—what ages seem to have passed! What a gulf between to-day and yesterday! Who is that little child calling her chickens, or watering her roses yonder? Are she and that girl the same Hester Lambert? Why, she is ever so much older than Theo now—Theo, who has always been so composed, and so clever, and so old for her age. But in a night or two Hester has lived—O, long, long years! So have many besides: and poppy and mandragora will never medicine them to the sweet sleep they tasted yesterday.

Maria Esmond saw the Lambert cavalcade drive away, and felt a grim relief. She looks with hot eyes at Harry when he comes in to his aunt's card-tables, flushed with Barbeau's good wine. He laughs, rattles, in reply to his aunt, who asks him which of the girls is his sweetheart? He gaily says, he loves them both like sisters. He has never seen a better gentleman, nor better people, than the Lamberts. Why is Lambert not a general? He has been a most distinguished officer: his Royal Highness the Duke is very fond of him. Madame Bernstein says, that Harry must make interest with Lady Yarmouth for his protégé.

"Elle ravvole de fous, cher bedid anche!" says Madame Bernstein, mimicking the countess's German accent. The baroness is delighted with her boy's success. "You carry off the hearts of all the old women, doesn't he, Maria?" she says with a sneer at her niece, who quivers under the stab.

"You were quite right, my dear, not to perceive that she cheated at cards, and you play like a grand seigneur," continues Madame de Bernstein.

"*Did* she cheat?" cries Harry astonished. "I am sure, ma'am, I saw no unfair play."

"No more did I, my dear, but I am sure she cheated. Bah! every woman cheats. I and Maria included, when we can get a chance. But, when you play with the Walmoden, you don't do wrong to lose in moderation: and many men cheat in that way. Cultivate her. She has taken a fancy to your *beaux yeux*. Why should your Excellency not be Governor of Virginia, sir? You must go and pay your respects to the Duke and his Majesty at Kensington. The Countess of Yarmouth will be your best friend at Court."

"Why should you not introduce me, aunt?" asked Harry.

The old lady's rouged cheek grew a little redder. "I am not in favour at Kensington," she said. "I may have been once; and there are no faces so unwelcome to kings as those they wish to forget. All of us want to forget something or somebody. I daresay our *ingénu* here would like to wipe a sum or two off the slate. Wouldst thou not, Harry?"

Harry turned red, too, and so did Maria, and his aunt laughed one of those wicked laughs which are not altogether pleasant to hear. What meant those guilty signals on the cheeks of her nephew and niece? What account was scored upon the memory of either, which they were desirous to efface? I fear Madame Bernstein was right, and that most folks have some ugly reckonings written up on their consciences, which we were glad to be quit of.

Had Maria known one of the causes of Harry's disquiet, that middle-aged spinster would have been more unquiet still. For some days he had missed a pocket-book. He had remembered it in his possession on that day, when he drank so much claret at the White Horse, and Gumbo carried him to bed. He sought for it in the morning, but none of his servants had seen it. He had inquired for it at the White Horse, but there were no traces of it. He could not cry the book, and could only make very cautious inquiries respecting it. He must not have it known that the book was lost. A pretty condition of mind Lady Maria Esmond would be in, if she knew that the outpourings of her heart were in the hands of the public! The letters contained all sorts of disclosures; a hundred family secrets were narrated by the artless correspondent: there was ever so much satire and abuse of persons with whom she and Mr. Warrington came in contact. There were expostulations about his attentions to other ladies. There was scorn, scandal, jokes, appeals, protests of eternal fidelity; the usual farrago, dear madam, which you may remember you wrote to your Edward, when you were engaged to him, and before you became Mrs. Jones. Would you like those letters to be read by anyone else? Do you recollect what you said about the Miss Browns in two or three of those letters, and the unfavourable opinion you expressed of Mrs. Thompson's character? Do you happen to recal the words which you used regarding Jones himself, whom you subsequently married (for in consequence of disputes about the settlements your engagement with Edward was broken off)? and would you like Mr. J. to see those remarks? You know you wouldn't. Then be pleased to withdraw that imputation which you have already cast in your mind upon Lady Maria Esmond. No doubt her letters were very foolish, as most loveletters are, but it does not follow that there was anything wrong in them. They are foolish when written by young folks to one another, and how much more foolish when written by an old man to a young lass, or by an old lass to a young lad! No wonder Lady Maria should not like her letters to be read. Why, the very spelling—but that didn't matter so much in her ladyship's days, and people are just as foolish now,

though they spell better. No, it is not the spelling which matters so much; it is the writing at all. I for one, and for the future, am determined never to speak or write my mind out regarding any thing or any body. I intend to say of every woman that she is chaste and handsome; of every man that he is handsome, clever, and rich; of every book that it is delightfully interesting; of Snobmore's manners that they are gentlemanlike; of Screwby's dinners that they are luxurious; of Jawkins's conversation that it is lively and amusing; of Xantippe, that she has a sweet temper; of Jezebel, that her colour is natural; of Bluebeard, that he really was most indulgent to his wives, and that very likely they died of bronchitis. What? a word against the spotless Messalina? What an unfavourable view of human nature! What? King Cheops was not a perfect monarch? O, you railer at royalty and slanderer of all that is noble and good! When this book is concluded, I shall change the jaundiced livery which my books have worn since I began to lisp in numbers, have rose-coloured coats for them with cherubs on the cover, and all the characters within shall be perfect angels.

Meanwhile we are in a society of men and women, from whose shoulders no sort of wings have sprouted as yet, and who, without any manner of doubt, have their little failings. There is Madame Bernstein: she has fallen asleep after dinner, and eating and drinking too much, —those are her ladyship's little failings. Mr. Harry Warrington has gone to play a match at billiards with Count Caramboli: I suspect idleness is *his* failing. That is what Mr. Chaplain Sampson remarks to Lady Maria, as they are talking together in a low tone, so as not to interrupt Aunt Bernstein's doze in the neighbouring room.

"A gentleman of Mr. Warrington's means can afford to be idle," says Lady Maria. "Why, sure you love cards and billiards yourself, my good Mr. Sampson?"

"I don't say, madam, my practice is good, only my doctrine is sound," says Mr. Chaplain with a sigh. "This young gentleman should have some employment. He should appear at Court, and enter the service of his country, as befits a man of his station. He should settle down, and choose a woman of a suitable rank as his wife." Sampson looks in her ladyship's face as he speaks.

"Indeed, my cousin is wasting his time," says Lady Maria, blushing slightly.

"Mr. Warrington might see his relatives of his father's family," suggests Mr. Chaplain.

"Suffolk country boobies drinking beer and hallooing after foxes! I don't see anything to be gained by his frequenting them, Mr. Sampson!"

"They are of an ancient family, of which the chief has been knight of the shire these hundred years," says the Chaplain. "I have heard Sir Miles hath a daughter of Mr. Harry's age—and a beauty, too."

"I know nothing, sir, about Sir Miles Warrington, and his daughters, and his beauties!" cries Maria, in a fluster.

"The baroness stirred—no—her ladyship is in a sweet sleep," says

the Chaplain, in a very soft voice. "I fear, madam, for your ladyship's cousin, Mr. Warrington. I fear for his youth; for designing persons who may get about him; for extravagances, follies, intrigues even into which he will be led, and into which everybody will try to tempt him. His lordship, my kind patron, bade me to come and watch over him, and I am here accordingly, as your ladyship knoweth. I know the follies of young men. Perhaps I have practised them myself. I own it with a blush," adds Mr. Sampson with much unction—not, however, bringing the promised blush forward to corroborate the asserted repentance.

"Between ourselves, I fear Mr. Warrington is in some trouble now, madam," continues the Chaplain, steadily looking at Lady Maria.

"What, again?" shrieks the lady.

"Hush! Your ladyship's dear invalid!" whispers the Chaplain, again pointing towards Madame Bernstein. "Do you think your cousin has any partiality for any—any member of Mr. Lambert's family? for example, Miss Lambert?"——

"There is nothing between him and Miss Lambert," says Lady Maria.

"Your ladyship is certain?"

"Women are said to have good eyes in such matters, my good Sampson," says my lady, with an easy air. "I thought the little girl seemed to be following him."

"Then I am at fault once more," the frank Chaplain said. "Mr. Warrington said of the young lady, that she ought to go back to her doll, and called her a pert stuck-up little hussy."

"Ah!" sighed Lady Mary, as if relieved by the news.

"Then, madam, there must be somebody else," said the Chaplain. "Has he confided nothing to your ladyship?"

"To me, Mr. Sampson? What? Where? How?" exclaims Maria.

"Some six days ago, after we had been dining at the White Horse, and drinking too freely, Mr. Warrington lost a pocket-book containing letters."

"Letters?" gasps Lady Maria.

"And probably more money than he likes to own," continues Mr. Sampson, with a grave nod of the head. "He is very much disturbed about the book. We have both made cautious inquiries about it. We have —— Gracious powers, is your ladyship ill?"

Here my Lady Maria gave three remarkably shrill screams, and tumbled off her chair.

"I will see the Prince. I have a right to see him. What's this?—Where am I?—What's the matter?" cries Madame Bernstein, waking up from her sleep. She had been dreaming of old days, no doubt. The old lady shook in all her limbs—her face was very much flushed. She stared about wildly a moment, and then tottered forward on her tortoiseshell cane. "What—what's the matter?" she asked again. "Have you killed her, sir?"

"Some sudden qualm must have come over her ladyship. Shall I cut her laces, madam? or send for a doctor?" cries the Chaplain, with every look of innocence and alarm.

"What has passed between you, sir?" asked the old lady, fiercely.

"I give you my honour, madam, I have done I don't know what. I but mentioned that Mr. Warrington had lost a pocket-book containing letters, and my lady swooned, as you see."

Madame Bernstein dashed water on her niece's face. A feeble moan told presently that the lady was coming to herself.

The Baroness looked sternly after Mr. Sampson, as she sent him away on his errand for the doctor. Her aunt's grim countenance was of little comfort to poor Maria when she saw it on waking up from her swoon.

"What has happened?" asked the younger lady, bewildered and gasping.

"Hm! *You* know best what has happened, madam, I suppose. What hath happened before in our family?" cried the old Baroness, glaring at her niece with savage eyes.

"Ah! yes! the letters have been lost—ach lieber Himmel!" And Maria, as she would sometimes do, when much moved, began to speak in the language of her mother.

"Yes! the seal has been broken, and the letters have been lost. 'Tis the old story of the Esmonds," cried the elder, bitterly.

"Seal broken, letters lost? What do you mean, aunt?" asked Maria, faintly.

"I mean that my mother was the only honest woman that ever entered the family!" cried the Baroness, stamping her foot. "And she was a parson's daughter of no family in particular, or she would have gone wrong, too. Good Heavens! is it decreed that we are all to be . . .?"

"To be what, madam?" cried Maria.

"To be what my Lady Queensberry said we were last night. To be what we *are!* You know the word for it!" cried the indignant old woman. "I say, what has come to the whole race? Your father's mother was an honest woman, Maria. Why did I leave her? Why couldn't you remain so?"

"Madam!" exclaims Maria, "I declare, before Heaven, I am as ——"

"Bah! Don't madam me! Don't call Heaven to witness—there's nobody by! And if you swore to your innocence till the rest of your teeth dropped out of your mouth, my Lady Maria Esmond, I would not believe you!"

"Ah! It was you told him!" gasped Maria. She recognised an arrow out of her aunt's quiver.

"I saw some folly going on between you and the boy, and I told him that you were as old as his mother. Yes, I did! Do you suppose I am going to let Henry Esmond's boy fling himself and his wealth away upon such a battered old rock as you? The boy sha'n't be robbed and cheated in our family. Not a shilling of mine shall any of you have if he comes to any harm amongst you."

"Ah! you told him!" cried Maria, with a sudden burst of rebellion. "Well, then! I'd have you to know that I don't care a penny, madam, for your paltry money! I have Mr. Harry Warrington's word—yes, and his letters—and I know he will die rather than break it."

"He will die if he keeps it!" (Maria shrugged her shoulders.) "But you don't care for that—you've no more heart ——"

"Than my father's sister, madam!" cries Maria again. The younger woman, ordinarily submissive, had turned upon her persecutor.

"Ah! Why did not I marry an honest man?" said the old lady, shaking her head sadly. "Henry Esmond was noble and good, and perhaps might have made me so. But no, no—we have all got the taint in us—all! You don't mean to sacrifice this boy, Maria?"

"Madame ma tante, do you take me for a fool at my age?" asks Maria.

"Set him free! I'll give you five thousand pounds—in my—in my will, Maria. I will, on my honour!"

"When you were young, and you liked Colonel Esmond, you threw him aside for an earl, and the earl for a duke?"

"Yes."

"Eh! *Bon sang ne peut mentir!* I have no money, I have no friends. My father was a spendthrift, my brother is a beggar. I have Mr. Warrington's word, and I know, madam, he will keep it. And that's what I tell your ladyship!" cries Lady Maria with a wave of her hand. "Suppose my letters are published to all the world to-morrow? Après? I know they contain things I would as leave not tell. Things not about *me* alone. *Comment!* Do you suppose there are no stories but mine in the family? It is not my letters that I am afraid of, so long as I have his, madam. Yes, his and his word, and I trust them both."

"I will send to my merchant, and give you the money now, Maria," pleaded the old lady.

"No, I shall have my pretty Harry, and ten times five thousand pounds!" cries Maria.

"Not till his mother's death, madam, who is just your age!"

"We can afford to wait, aunt. At my age, as you say, I am not so eager as young chits for a husband."

"But to wait my sister's death, at least, is a drawback?"

"Offer me ten thousand pounds, Madam Tusher, and then we will see!" cries Maria.

"I have not so much money in the world, Maria," said the old lady.

"Then, madam, let me make what I can for myself!" says Maria.

"Ah, if he heard you?"

"Après? I have his word. I know he will keep it. I can afford to wait, madam," and she flung out of the room, just as the Chaplain returned. It was Madame Bernstein who wanted cordials now. She was immensely moved and shocked by the news which had been thus suddenly brought to her.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

WHICH SEEMS TO MEAN MISCHIEF.

THOUGH she had clearly had the worst of the battle described in the last chapter, the Baroness Bernstein, when she next met her niece, showed no rancour or anger. "Of course, my Lady Maria," she said, "you can't suppose that I, as Harry Warrington's near relative, can be pleased at the idea of his marrying a woman who is as old as his mother, and has not a penny to her fortune; but if he chooses to do so silly a thing, the affair is none of mine; and I doubt whether I should have been much inclined to be taken *au sérieux* with regard to that offer of five thousand pounds which I made in the heat of our talk. So it was already at Castlewood that this pretty affair was arranged? Had I known how far it had gone, my dear, I should have spared some needless opposition. When a pitcher is broken, what railing can mend it?"

"Madam!" here interposed Maria.

"Pardon me—I mean nothing against your ladyship's honour or character, which, no doubt, are quite safe. Harry says so, and you say so—what more can one ask?"

"You have talked to Mr. Warrington, madam?"

"And he has owned that he made you a promise at Castlewood: that you have it in his writing."

"Certainly I have, madam?" says Lady Maria.

"Ah!" (the elder lady did not wince at this.) "And I own, too, that at first I put a wrong construction upon the tenor of your letters to him. They implicate other members of the family —"

"Who have spoken most wickedly of me, and endeavoured to prejudice me in every way in my dear Mr. Warrington's eyes. Yes, madam, I own I have written against them, to justify myself."

"But, of course, are pained to think that any wretch should get possession of stories to the disadvantage of our family, and make them public scandal. Hence your disquiet just now."

"Exactly so," said Lady Maria. "From Mr. Warrington I could have nothing concealed henceforth, and spoke freely to him. But that is a very different thing from wishing all the world to know the disputes of a noble family."

"Upon my word, Maria, I admire you, and have done you injustice these—these twenty years, let us say."

"I am very glad, madam, that you end by doing me justice at all," said the niece.

"When I saw you last night, opening the ball with my nephew, can you guess what I thought of, my dear?"

"I really have no idea what the Baroness de Bernstein thought of," said Lady Maria, haughtily.

"I remembered that you had performed to that very tune with the dancing-master at Kensington, my dear!"

"Madam, it was an infamous calumny."

"By which the poor dancing-master got a cudgelling for nothing!"

"It is cruel and unkind, madam, to recal that calumny—and I shall beg to decline living any longer with any one who utters it," continued Maria, with great spirit.

"You wish to go home? I can fancy you won't like Tunbridge. It will be very hot for you if those letters are found."

"There was not a word against you in them, madam: about that I can make your mind easy."

"So Harry said, and did your ladyship justice. Well, my dear, we are tired of one another, and shall be better apart for a while."

"That is precisely my own opinion," said Lady Maria, dropping a curtsey.

"Mr. Sampson can escort you to Castlewood. You and your maid can take a post-chaise."

"We can take a post-chaise, and Mr. Sampson can escort me," echoed the younger lady. "You see, madam, I act like a dutiful niece."

"Do you know, my dear, I have a notion that Sampson has got the letters?" said the Baroness, frankly.

"I confess that such a notion has passed through my own mind."

"And you want to go home in the chaise, and coax the letters from him? Dalilah! Well, they can be no good to me, and I trust you

may get them. When will you go? The sooner the better, you say? We are women of the world, Maria. We only call names when we are in a passion. We don't want each other's company; and we part on good terms. Shall we go to my Lady Yarmouth's? 'Tis her night. There is nothing like a change of scene after one of those little nervous attacks you have had, and cards drive away unpleasant thoughts better than any doctor."

Lady Maria agreed to go to Lady Yarmouth's cards, and was dressed and ready first, awaiting her aunt in the drawing-room. Madame Bernstein, as she came down, remarked Maria's door was left open. "She has the letters upon her," thought the old lady. And the pair went off to their entertainment in their respective chairs, and exhibited towards each other that charming cordiality and respect which women can show after, and even during, the bitterest quarrels.

That night, on their return from the Countess's drum, Mrs. Brett, Madame Bernstein's maid, presented herself to my Lady Maria's call, when that lady rang her hand-bell upon retiring to her room. Betty, Mrs. Brett was ashamed to say, was not in a fit state to come before my lady. Betty had been a-junketting and merry-making with Mr. Warrington's black gentleman, with my Lord Bamborough's valet, and several more ladies and gentlemen of that station, and the liquor—Mrs. Brett was shocked to own it—had proved too much for Mrs. Betty. Should Mrs. Brett undress my lady? My lady said she would undress without a maid, and gave Mrs. Brett leave to withdraw. "She has the letters in her stays," thought Madame Bernstein. They had bidden each other an amicable Good-night on the stairs.

Mrs. Betty had a scolding the next morning, when she came to wait on her mistress, from the closet adjoining Lady Maria's apartment in which Betty lay. She owned, with contrition, her partiality for rum-punch, which Mr. Gumbo had the knack of brewing most delicate. She took her scolding with meekness, and, having performed her usual duties about her lady's person, retired.

Now Betty was one of the Castlewood girls who had been so fascinated by Gumbo, and was a very good-looking, blue-eyed lass, upon whom Mr. Case, Madame Bernstein's confidential man, had also cast the eyes of affection. Hence, between Messrs. Gumbo and Case, there had been jealousies, and even quarrels; which had caused Gumbo, who was of a peaceful disposition, to be rather shy of the Baroness's gentlemen, the chief of whom vowed he would break the bones, or have the life of Gumbo, if he persisted in his attentions to Mrs. Betty.

But, on the night of the rum-punch, though Mr. Case found Gumbo and Mrs. Betty whispering in the doorway, in the cool breeze, and Gumbo would have turned pale with fear had he been able so to do, no one could be more gracious than Mr. Case. It was he who proposed the bowl of punch, which was brewed and drunk in Mrs. Betty's room, and which Gumbo concocted with exquisite skill. He complimented Gumbo on his music. Though a sober man ordinarily, he insisted

upon more and more drinking, until poor Mrs. Betty was reduced to the state which occasioned her lady's just censure.

As for Mr. Case himself, who lay out of the house, he was so ill with the punch, that he kept his bed the whole of the next day, and did not get strength to make his appearance, and wait on his ladies, until supper-time; when his mistress good-naturedly rebuked him, saying that it was not often he sinned in that way.

"Why, Case, I could have made oath it was you I saw on horseback this morning galloping on the London road," said Mr. Warrington, who was supping with his relatives.

"Me; law bless you, sir! I was a-bed, and I thought my head would come off with the aching. I ate a bit at six o'clock, and drunk a deal of small beer, and I'm almost my own man again now. But that Gumbo, saving your honour's presence, I won't taste none of his punch again." And the honest major domo went on with his duties among the bottles and glasses.

As they sate after their meal, Madame Bernstein was friendly enough. She prescribed strong fortifying drinks for Maria, against the recurrence of her fainting fits. The lady had such attacks not unfrequently. She urged her to consult her London physician, and to send up an account of her case by Harry. By Harry? asked the lady. Yes. Harry was going for two days on an errand for his aunt to London. "I do not care to tell you, my dear, that it is on business which will do him good. I wish Mr. Draper to put him into my will, and as I am going travelling upon a round of visits when you and I part, I think, for security, I shall ask Mr. Warrington to take my trinket-box in his post-chaise to London with him, for there have been robberies of late, and I have no fancy for being stopped by highwaymen."

Maria looked blank at the notion of the young gentleman's departure, but hoped that she might have his escort back to Castlewood, whither her elder brother had now returned. "Nay," says his aunt, "the lad hath been tied to our apron-strings long enough. A day in London will do him no harm. He can perform my errand for me and be back with you by Saturday."

"I would offer to accompany Mr. Warrington, but I preach on Friday before her ladyship," says Mr. Sampson. He was anxious that my Lady Yarmouth should judge of his powers, as a preacher; and Madame Bernstein had exerted her influence with the king's favourite to induce her to hear the Chaplain.

Harry relished the notion of a rattling journey to London and a day or two of sport there. He promised that his pistols were good, and that he would hand the diamonds over in safety to the banker's strong-room. Would he occupy his aunt's London house? No, that would be a dreary lodging with only a housemaid and a groom in charge of it. He would go to the Star and Garter in Pall Mall, or to an inn in Covent Garden. Ah! I have often talked over that journey," said Harry, his countenance saddening.

"And with whom, sir?" asked Lady Maria.

"With one who promised to make it with me," said the young man, thinking, as he always did, with an extreme tenderness of the lost brother."

"He has more heart, my good Maria, than some of us!" says Harry's aunt, witnessing his emotion. Uncontrollable gusts of grief would, not unfrequently, still pass over our young man. The parting from his brother; the scenes and circumstances of George's fall last year; the recollection of his words, or of some excursion at home which they had planned together; would recur to him and overcome him. "I doubt, madam," whispered the Chaplain, demurely, to Madame Bernstein, after one of these bursts of sorrow, "whether some folks in England would suffer quite so much at the death of their elder brother."

But, of course, this sorrow was not to be perpetual; and we can fancy Mr. Warrington setting out on his London journey eagerly enough, and very gay and happy, if it must be owned, to be rid of his elderly attachment. Yes. There was no help for it. At Castlewood, on one unlucky evening, he had made an offer of his heart and himself to his mature cousin, and she had accepted the foolish lad's offer. But the marriage now was out of the question. He must consult his mother. She was the mistress for life of the Virginian property. Of course, she would refuse her consent to such a union. The thought of it was deferred to a late period. Meanwhile, it hung like a weight round the young man's neck, and caused him no small remorse and disquiet.

No wonder that his spirits rose more gaily as he came near London, and that he looked with delight from his post-chaise windows upon the city as he advanced towards it. No highwayman stopped our traveller on Blackheath. Yonder are the gleaming domes of Greenwich, canopied with woods. There is the famous Thames with its countless shipping; there actually is the Tower of London. Look, Gumbo! "There is the Tower!" "Yes, master," says Gumbo, who has never heard of the Tower; but Harry has, and remembers how he has read about it in Howell's Medulla, and how he and his brother used to play at the Tower, and he thinks with delight now, how he is actually going to see the armour and the jewels and the lions. They pass through Southwark and over that famous London Bridge which was all covered with houses like a street two years ago. Now there is only a single gate left, and that is coming down. Then the chaise rolls through the city; and, "Look, Gumbo, that is Saint Paul's!" "Yes, master; Saint Paul's," says Gumbo, obsequiously, but little struck by the beauties of the architecture, and so by the well-known course we reach the Temple, and Gumbo and his master look up with awe at the rebel heads on Temple Bar.

The chaise drives to Mr. Draper's chambers in Middle Temple Lane, where Harry handed the precious box over to Mr. Draper, and a letter from his aunt, which the gentleman read with some interest seemingly,

and carefully put away. He then consigned the trinket-box to his strong-closet, went into the adjoining room, taking his clerk with him, and then was at Mr. Warrington's service to take him to an hotel. A hotel in Covent Garden was fixed upon as the best place for his residence. "I shall have to keep you for two or three days, Mr. Warrington," the lawyer said. "I don't think the papers which the Baroness wants can be ready until then. Meanwhile I am at your service to see the town. I live out of it myself, and have a little box at Camberwell, where I shall be proud to have the honour of entertaining Mr. Warrington; but a young man, I suppose, will like his inn and his liberty best, sir."

Harry said yes, he thought the inn would be best, and the post-chaise and a clerk of Mr. Draper's inside was despatched to the Bedford, whither the two gentlemen agreed to walk on foot.

Mr. Draper and Mr. Warrington sat and talked for a while. The Drapers, father and son, had been lawyers time out of mind to the Esmond family, and the attorney related to the young gentleman numerous stories regarding his ancestors of Castlewood. Of the present Earl Mr. Draper was no longer the agent: his father and his lordship had had differences, and his lordship's business had been taken elsewhere: but the Baroness was still their honoured client, and very happy indeed was Mr. Draper to think that her ladyship was so well disposed towards her nephew.

As they were taking their hats to go out, a young clerk of the house stopped his principal in the passage, and said: "If you please, sir, them papers of the Baroness was given to her ladyship's man, Mr. Case, two days ago."

"Just please to mind your own business, Mr. Brown," said the lawyer rather sharply. "This way, Mr. Warrington. Our Temple stairs are rather dark. Allow me to show you the way."

Harry saw Mr. Draper darting a Parthian look of anger at Mr. Brown. "So it *was* Case I saw on the London Road two days ago," he thought. "What business brought the old fox to London?" Wherewith, not choosing to be inquisitive about other folks' affairs, he dismissed the subject from his mind.

Whither should they go first? First, Harry was for going to see the place where his grandfather and Lord Castlewood had fought a duel fifty-six years ago, in Leicester Field. Mr. Draper knew the place well, and all about the story. They might take Covent Garden on their way to Leicester Field, and see that Mr. Warrington was comfortably lodged. And order dinner, says Mr. Warrington. No, Mr. Draper could not consent to that. Mr. Warrington must be so obliging as to honour him on that day. In fact, he had made so bold as to order a collation from the Cock. Mr. Warrington could not decline an invitation so pressing, and walked away gaily with his friend, passing under that arch where the heads were, and taking off his hat to them, much to the lawyer's astonishment.

"They were gentlemen who died for their king, sir. My dear brother George and I always said, we would salute 'em when we saw 'em," Mr. Warrington said.

"You'll have a mob at your heels if you do, sir," said the alarmed lawyer.

"Confound the mob, sir," said Mr. Harry, loftily, but the passers-by thinking about their own affairs, did not take any notice of Mr. Warrington's conduct; and he walked up the thronging Strand, gazing with delight upon all he saw, remembering, I daresay, for all his life after, the sights and impressions there presented to him, but, maintaining a discreet reserve; for he did not care to let the lawyer know how much he was moved, or the public perceive that he was a stranger. He did not hear much of his companion's talk, though the latter chattered ceaselessly on the way. Nor was Mr. Draper displeased by the young Virginian's silent and haughty demeanour. A hundred years ago a gentleman was a gentleman, and his attorney his very humble servant.

The chamberlain at the Bedford showed Mr. Warrington to his rooms, bowing before him with delightful obsequiousness, for Gumbo had already trumpeted his master's greatness, and Mr. Draper's clerk announced that the new-comer was a "high fellar." Then, the rooms surveyed, the two gentlemen went to Leicester Field, Mr. Gumbo strutting behind his master; and, having looked at the scene of his grandsire's wound, and poor Lord Castlewood's tragedy, they returned to the Temple to Mr. Draper's chambers.

Who was that shabby-looking big man Mr. Warrington bowed to as they went out after dinner for a walk in the gardens? That was Mr. Johnson, an author, whom he had met at Tunbridge Wells. "Take the advice of a man of the world, sir," says Mr. Draper, eyeing the shabby man of letters very superciliously. "The less you have to do with that kind of person the better. The business we have into our office about them literary men is not very pleasant, I can tell you." "Indeed!" says Mr. Warrington. He did not like his new friend the more as the latter grew more familiar. The theatres were shut. Should they go to Sadler's Wells? or Marybone Gardens? or Ranelagh? or how? "Not Ranelagh," says Mr. Draper; "because there's none of the nobility in town;" but, seeing in the newspaper that at the entertainment at Sadler's Wells, Islington, there would be the most singular kind of diversion on eight hand-bells by Mr. Franklyn, as well as the surprising performances of Signora Catherina, Harry wisely determined that he would go to Marybone Gardens, where they had a concert of music, a choice of tea, coffee, and all sorts of wines, and the benefit of Mr. Draper's ceaseless conversation. The lawyer's obsequiousness only ended at Harry's bedroom door. Where, with haughty grandeur, the young gentleman bade his talkative host good night.

The next morning, Mr. Warrington, arrayed in his brocade bed-

gown, took his breakfast, read the newspaper, and enjoyed his ease in his inn. He read in the paper news from his own country. And when he saw the words, Williamsburg, Virginia, June 7th. His eyes grew dim somehow. He had just had letters by that packet of June 7th, but his mother did not tell how, "A great number of the principal gentry of the colony have associated themselves under the command of the Honourable Peyton Randolph, Esquire, to march to the relief of their distressed fellow subjects, and revenge the cruelties of the French and their barbarous allies. They are in a uniform: viz. a plain blue frock, nanquin or brown waistcoats and breeches, and plain hats. They are armed each with a light firelock, a brace of pistols, and a cutting sword."

"Ah, why ain't we there, Gumbo?" cried out Harry.

"Why ain't we dar?" shouted Gumbo.

"Why am I here, dangling at women's trains?" continued the Virginian.

"Think dangling at women's trains very pleasant, Master Harry!" says the materialistic Gumbo, who was also very little affected by some further home news which his master read; viz., that The Lovely Sally, Virginia ship, had been taken in sight of port by a French privateer.

And now reading that the finest mare in England, and a pair of very genteel bay geldings, were to be sold at the Bull Inn, the lower end of Hatton Garden, Harry determined to go and look at the animals, and inquired his way to the place. He then and there bought the genteel bay geldings, and paid for them with easy generosity. He never said what he did on that day, being shy of appearing like a stranger; but it is believed that he took a coach and went to Westminster Abbey, from which he bade the coachman drive him to the Tower, then to Mrs. Salmon's Waxwork, then to Hyde Park and Kensington Palace; then he had given orders to go to the Royal Exchange, but catching a glimpse of Covent Garden, on his way to the Exchange, he bade Jehu take him to his inn, and cut short his enumeration of places to which he had been, by flinging the fellow a guinea.

Mr. Draper had called in his absence, and said he would come again; but Mr. Warrington, having dined sumptuously by himself, went off nimbly to Marybone Gardens again, in the same noble company.

As he issued forth the next day, the bells of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, were ringing for morning prayers, and reminded him that friend Sampson was going to preach his sermon. Harry smiled. He had begun to have a shrewd and just opinion of the value of Mr. Sampson's sermons.

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12 Tea Spoons do.	0 16 0	1 4 0	1 7 0	1 16 0
2 Sauce Ladles do.	0 8 0	0 10 0	0 11 0	0 13 0
1 Gravy Spoon do.	0 7 0	0 10 6	0 11 0	0 13 0
4 Salt Spoons (gilt bowls)	0 6 8	0 10 0	0 12 0	0 14 0
1 Mustard Spoon do.	0 1 8	0 2 6	0 3 0	0 3 6
1 Pair Sugar Tongs do.	0 3 6	0 5 6	0 6 0	0 7 0
1 Pair Fish Carvers do.	1 0 0	1 10 0	1 14 0	1 18 0
1 Butter Knife do.	0 3 0	0 5 0	0 6 0	0 7 0
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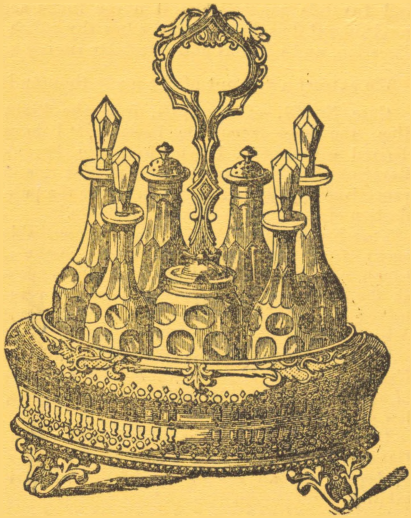

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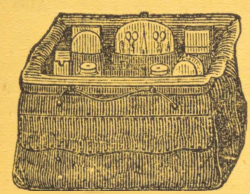

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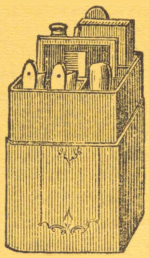

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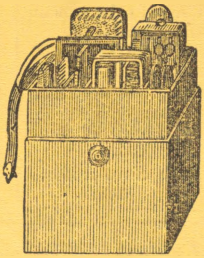

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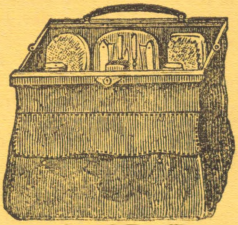

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